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LETTER DATED 15 MAY 1992 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SOMALIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Allow me to thank you and the members of the Security Council, once again, for your ceaseless efforts to resolve the crisis in my country - Somalia - and for adopting resolution 751 (1992) in this regard. Furthermore, I can only remain deeply gratified for the Secretary-General's tireless endeavours in search for solutions in implementing the Council's recommendations. I am particularly grateful that a Special Representative has been appointed to Somalia under the auspices of the Council and in accordance with the said resolution.

I find it the role of my Mission, as much as it is a personal obligation, to respond on behalf of the most neutral voice of my fractured nation. I remain seized of such opportunities as would enable me to provide constructive feedback and sincere reactions to events and issues that matter to the Council in their endeavours to assist my nation to solve its problems. This letter represents one such opportunity and I hope you and the members of the Council will find it as I avow it is. I also hope that you will find the suggestions contained herein positively bearing on your deliberations which I consider of immediate as well as eventual concern to all segments of my divided nation.

I would therefore be grateful if this letter and its annex were circulated in their entirety as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ms. Fatun Mohamed HASSAN
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

SOME ISSUES OF CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOMALI CRISIS

It is gratifying to note that the cease-fire in Mogadishu has been holding and humanitarian assistance has been reaching the affected population in and around Mogadishu. Another significant development has been that the former President finally left the country. But the situation has been worsening in some other parts of the country. For instance, in the north and specifically in areas immediately controlled by the Somali National Movement (SNM), the security situation has deteriorated despite relative calm in the last year or so. In the south, there has been heavy fighting between factions to the south and west of Mogadishu. The violence in other parts does not seem to have gained equal attention from the international community. The plight and suffering of people in those other parts is equal in magnitude to that in Mogadishu, but they lack media representation and non-governmental organization residence to report about their conditions.

Notwithstanding the wilful and sincere undertaking of the Security Council to intervene, the new developments complicate matters much more. The agreements that the United Nations Technical Team has obtained, annexed to the Secretary-General's report (S/23829), from some leaders during its visits to some places in the country appear not to be binding. Indeed, reports about growing antagonism towards the deployment of United Nations forces in Somalia are on the increase. Much more discouraging, I am afraid, is that the criticisms have been coming not only from the clan, militia and party leaders that have not been visited by the Technical Team, but also from those leaders who have personally signed the agreements or from their designated spokesmen and representatives.

Our letter (S/23763) discussed some aspects of the challenge that lay ahead for the international community in tackling the Somali crisis. It tried to draw some parameters for action, in their light, which, I honestly believed, would ensure optimum conditions for fair political representation in the interest of peace and the equitable distribution of relief assistance. It has been disappointing that the first steps of the United Nations intervention has drawn as much antagonism from my country's leaders as has been reported in the international media. This antagonism manifested by almost all factions is not difficult to understand. There are a number of factors of historical significance which underpin the current Somali political arena and which need to be understood in addressing the question.

Firstly, perhaps out of frustration with the failure of modern polity, government institutions and State, the Somalis appear to have resorted to their pristine and familiar, albeit minimally effective, system of organization - tribalism or clanism. Clanism as a political organization does not recruit its supporters and advocates in terms of their adherence to ideologies or intellectual clap-trap of theories, but has its converts already borne into it and their membership automatic by right of belonging - hence,

their loyalties a must and, in turn, their protection an obligation of the entire clan. That is why each clan ironically harbours its own members of the former regime and keeps them well protected within its enclave, no matter the magnitude of alleged wrongdoing. However, the units of this clan-based organization are loosely coordinated and there is no systematic consultation between them. Hence any agreements with any one leader run the risk of being broken because of opposition from within his faction, let alone others.

Secondly, the antagonism emanates from a background ridden with experiences of political manipulation and injustice in which the former regime had constantly exploited political differences for its own ends of self-perpetuation. In addition to the discord and mistrust sown between the various clans and factions, the regime has left an attitude of suspicion and leeriness to any central authority. Thus, the people have been exploited so much and so long that they have become sceptical about the neutrality of any new central authority, especially that which would not lend itself to collective participation. Unfounded fear, that the United Nations assistance might be to the benefit of one faction or the other, is paramount and prevalent in this background. Perhaps one should not fail to appreciate that present-day Somalia does require the services of social scientists as much as it needs the services of international forces.

Thirdly, and even more saddening, is the tendency of some, otherwise well-meaning, friendly countries to seek more than just the reinstitution of the Somali State. These countries, in addition, tend to see their vested interests in parallel with the seemingly more objective cause they are pursuing. There are indications that these countries have implicated themselves by naively intervening in ways incompatible with the nature of the unpredictable Somali situation. Sadly enough, these countries have engaged in activities that seemed revealing of their favour for one clan or another, in both the sphere of war and the arena of diplomacy, therefore discrediting themselves with those clans that missed their patronage. There are many such nations which have lost their credibility with the one clan or another because of perceptions of partiality in the roles they have allegedly played in the situation. With this perspective in the background, the factions would remain wary of any foreign involvement unless convincingly shown otherwise.

But the deployment of United Nations forces which seems to be the centre of the Somali antagonism has also generated some debate in an international context. There are those who allege that some of the economically powerful nations in the "new world order" were not forthcoming with the required resources because the Somali case ranks low in their priorities of world issues and problems. These nations, the argument runs, consider their contributions as opportunities forgone in the expense of more important issues in more important parts of the world. This argument, I believe, is not all that convincing and I certainly do not subscribe to it. The involvement of the United Nations at the level of the Security Council is indicative of the degree of concern and importance attached to the Somali crisis and we are indeed grateful. However, counter-arguments to this politically charged view are some that generally run the risk of being misconstrued because of

Somalia's volatile and illusive situation. Many standpoints that would have otherwise been considered noble and appreciable, in relation to any other place and time, can be perceived as complacency on the part of the more economically powerful nations here, especially when there are persistent international media cries for help to my doomed nation.

The international debate and the aversion displayed by protagonists in Somalia reflect two different contexts of the same scenario. At the one end, these controversies pose themselves in the form of rational and mature arguments in the corridors of high civility and modern diplomacy in the capitals which host international organizations and regional groups. However, on the two sides of the so-called "peace corridors" or "zones" in places like today's Mogadishu, which is the other end, these concerns reflect themselves in more than mere arguments. Rather, they manifest themselves as zest on the two sides of the "corridor" in a game of win-or-lose which lamentably involves the lives of millions. Examples of the one end of this reality have been experienced in the conference rooms of the international community, while the other has been merely and scarcely reported by a few visitors of my deplorable capital and my wretched kinsmen, who have opted for brutality and primitive measures in solving their problems.

It remains to be said: firstly, the issue is more about "sense" than dollars. Secondly, it should not be viewed in the context of the jungle of "South-North" dialogue or "first-world" - "third-world" politics. Thirdly, and most importantly, the intervention should not appear to warlords in my country as a motive for contest or a new opportunity to seize for achieving diplomatic coups, or gains in military terms, over their opponents in their callous and inhuman games. I am concerned that, unfortunately, such is the course that events appear to be running.

All must be reminded for now that the Somali case was presented to the Security Council in an attempt to seek the support of the international community as "one" in its pursuit of saving my nation from further bleeding. The greatest cost this involves for all interested nations is to put their will and weight behind the efforts to rescue Somalia before their own vested interests. Further, all Somalis would be eventually grateful for any just and fair arbitration that leads to the restoration of their statehood. But, in retrospect, they will be condemning any biased interference by anyone else or any other nation. In this case, the old saying applies: "one has not only to be fair, but has to be seen as fair". It must be strongly emphasized, once again, that any intervention to resolve the Somali crisis must be seen as fair to all constituent clans, sub-clans, factions, movements and parties. No doubt this is the principle and the collective will of the Council.

However, there are two significant but intricately overlapping aspects to presenting fairness in the specific political context of Somalia. The first is the obvious one, it is to ensure the fair representation of all clans in all the stages of the process of intervention, and the Security Council was already apprised of the inter-clan nature of the Somali conflict in an earlier letter (S/23507 and Corr.1). However, it must be stressed further that, while

the inter-clan perspective of the conflict is necessary for analysing and understanding the situation, it is not sufficient for resolving the problems.

This brings us to the second, and ultimately the more significant one, which in a sense builds on the first, and can escape attention. It is the cross-clan dimension of the conflict. Granted that the Somalis, in freeing themselves from an oppressive system, had to fall back to the only other familiar system they knew well enough. That does not mean that they wish to remain divided along clan lines. Efforts to resolve the conflict must therefore ultimately focus on the cross-clan dimension of the conflict. Deeply studied, the crisis will reveal that the political conflict that led to the civil war in Somalia was not only and originally between clans. It was also essentially a conflict of interest between the three economic groups in the society - nomadic, rural and urban - reflecting the traditional disparity between these economic groups in terms of power sharing, economic benefits and the availability of social services. Thus, a cross-section of the social clan-based structure reveals another form of social and economic division that warrants fairness in representation even within the one clan. It is worthy of emphasis that the cross-clan perspective is important since it will eventually be the basis for restored unity and stability. Further, it will be the perspective that will be necessarily adopted by any future responsible and effective government which will, by devolution, give a sense of belonging to all. I trust that the United Nations efforts will already envisage some forward-reaching in the process, to pave the way for this important outcome.

It must be clearly highlighted at this juncture that politicians and military leaders identify with the upper crest of the social order which, comprising only townspeople including the educated minority, makes not more than 20 per cent of the population, at best. Traditional leadership, on the other hand, although weakened by over 30 years of semi-modern government and particularly undermined for over two decades by a harsh military dictatorship, does still enjoy influence and respect with the nomadic and rural majority comprising 80 per cent of the population. Fairness in representation along cross-clan lines, signifying the socio-economic grouping of the population, would mean drawing upon views and aspirations of similar population sectors from across the board of clans. It was gratifying to note that the Secretary-General's report (S/23829) indicates a recognition of the potential role of elders and traditional leaders as regards the distribution of relief assistance. But, it must also be appreciated that these are equally influential in matters of war and peace.

Before concluding, I must mention that in previous correspondence (S/23507 and Corr.1), it was humbly indicated that some essential prerequisites for the success of an effective intervention would include: firstly, to ensure that all entities or factions should be identified with a view to all of them gaining the recognition of one another, which will facilitate an assembly of the whole nation; and secondly, to overcome the barriers of communication between the different factions. In the meantime, and while erstwhile divisions on the basis of clanism is the order of the day, it is incumbent on those assisting - to reinstate the nation - to reach beyond

the obvious in terms of both form and substance. It would be advisable, therefore, that mechanisms be established in this early stage to ensure a form of representation which would also facilitate the flow of communication between the various entities on matters of immediate concern, i.e. arrangements for the distribution of relief assistance.

In the light of the foregoing, I am inclined to propose an arrangement that would involve the creation of a consultative group of representatives from all contestant factions for consultation. The group would also be used as channels for communication with their respective factions by those assisting. Representatives would be working with their political and clan leadership but would in addition work with the local non-governmental organizations that all enclaves are now seen to have created or are in the process of forming. It would mean the opening of new lines of communication to replace those that have been blocked or carried distorted messages. But, most importantly, the group would be encouraged and nurtured as a forum for the exchange of views and ideas, for restoring constructive interaction and for building new bridges of confidence between the various factions for the first time in a while. Furthermore, the very function of such a representation will automatically, but eventually, define the number and nature of political grouping that merits consideration for participation to ensure fairness in all subsequent stages of the United Nations intervention. Technically, the group will also be involved in planning for subsequent stages of the intervention leading to the reconciliation conference. Such an arrangement would also ensure a form of gradual but collective participation of the Somalis in their affairs, the value of which is unequalled for peace and eventual reconciliation.

Since there is no safe and secure place in the country for all Somalis, the group will have to be based in one of the capitals of neighbouring countries through agreement with the would-be host Government. Nairobi is an obvious place since it also hosts - thanks to the Government of Kenya - the United Nations representation for Somalia. Of course, these representatives will necessarily be deputized and accredited by the leaders of their respective entities, and the number from each faction will be determined with them, on the one condition that they are all represented on an equal basis. A basic criterion that will need to be necessarily imposed is that these representatives should be educated enough and can speak one of the United Nations languages to be agreed on. It should not, however, be interpreted to mean a government-in-exile and should as such be agreed with all factions, and accordingly executed. Finally, before bringing this tiring paper to its end, four points need to be strongly but humbly emphasized.

First, hostage of its old perceptions, the world continues focused on a nostalgic Somalia that has changed and may never come back the same. In passing, all must keep an open mind about the notion of a future Somali State. Any realistic revival of the Somali unity and statehood may involve a renegotiation of all its present symbols, including capital, flag and terms of union, to say the least. It must be re-emphasized in any case that efforts to arrange for cease-fires in all parts of Somalia should be launched as a matter

of priority. On a similar note, it must be reiterated that there is a dire and urgent need for a multi-clan assembly, involving elders and traditional leaders, for an all-encompassing cease-fire.

Secondly, I have a strong feeling that the protracted Somali crisis will not be and cannot be resolved in any one single-shot exercise of isolated events or in a piecemeal fashion. Any magic, political formula must necessarily be process-oriented, exhaustive, comprehensive as well as far-reaching and must ultimately appeal to all views and aspirations along clan as well as cross-clan lines to draw support from all clans and factions as well as all sectors of the population. Only devices conceived in this spirit, I believe, could make the first steps towards bringing back together a nation that has drifted apart along the divide of clans and sub-clans, concealing its social decay and economic miseries beneath them.

Thirdly, the United Nations involvement, at the level of its highest governing body, the Security Council - it must be anticipated - could be the last resort for resolving the Somali dilemma. It will be sad to see its efforts fail because of mistrust by my already inflicted people, or at least segments of them, as might be generated by the idiosyncrasies of cursory action or inadvertent mishaps.

Fourthly, I believe that, in the end, only that which is just and fair will be right for all Somalis and will prevail to enable the restoration of peace, unity and stability. But equity and fairness are more perception-related than necessarily actual and can only be effectively served through ensuring participation by all contestants in one's efforts of mediation. It follows logically and automatically that no one can guarantee any one contentment and satisfaction in these spheres except through his own self-representation. Fair representation does not only foster the justice and democracy that Somalis are all seeking through their callous and primitive ways, but it is also a necessity for any successful mediation. I am sure that the United Nations will sponsor only that which embodies these virtues in Somalia. I therefore hope that, in addition to enforcing the arms embargo already imposed, the Security Council will be able to adopt measures that will proscribe all forms of intervention that may seem or be deemed to be biased and partial.